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REMARKS

Claims 1-30 are active and pending in the present application; all claims stand under non-Final rejection. Claims 20, 21, 27, and 28 stand rejected under 35 USC 101. Claims 1-4, 7, 14, 15, 17, 18, 20-23, and 26-30 stand rejected under 35 USC 102. Claims 5, 6, 8, 12, 13, 16, 24, and 25 stand rejected under 35 USC 103. Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for participating in a telephonic interview on November 1, 2006. During that interview, the Examiner suggested some clarifying claim language to more clearly distinguish the individual e-mail address recited in the claims and to more clearly describe patentable subject matter in claim 1. In response, Applicants present the enclosed remarks and amendments.

Claims 20, 21, 27, and 28 stand rejected under 35 USC 101 as directed to non-statutory subject matter. As originally presented, these claims recited a computer program. Accordingly, the claims have been amended to recite a computer-readable medium bearing an executable program which has been routinely recognized as patentable subject matter. Claims 20, 27, and 28 have been amended to recast the claim language as a computer-readable medium. Claim 21 has been cancelled. In view of amended claims 20, 27 and 28, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 USC 101 of claims 20, 21, 27, and 28.

During the Interview, the Examiner also expressed concern about whether the subject matter of claim 1 was patentable without explicitly referring to the software components being embodied on a computer-readable medium. Accordingly, claim 1 has been amended.

One suggestion proposed by the Examiner during the Interview was that the individual address recited in the claim could potentially be construed broad enough to encompass almost any identifying values that are exchanged between two parties and that explicitly reciting that the

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individual address is an e-mail address would overcome this problem. Accordingly, the claims have been amended to recite that the assigned individual address is an e-mail address. With this in mind, Applicants provide the following remarks.

Claims 1-4, 7, 14, 15, 17, 18, 20-23, and 26-30 stand rejected under 35 USC 102 as anticipated by Cockrill et al. (US 20030208442). The Examiner asserts that Cockrill et al. identically discloses every limitation recited in the claims. However, Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner and provide the following explanation of the differences between the claim language and the teachings of Cockrill et al.

Cockrill et al. discloses a transaction system for facilitating purchase transactions on a merchant's web site. When a user visits the merchant web site by using a browser, the transaction system checks a customer's member identifier and password. The transaction system of Cockrill et al. may notify a customer of an e-mail address of the merchant. However, Cockrill et al. fails to create a multitude of e-mail addresses which are assigned individually to customers.

Fig. 9 of Cockrill et al. is a flowchart for authenticating a customer. At step 901, the transaction system collects, from the customer, the customer's ID and password by presenting a sign-on dialog box 1000 into which the customer types his member identifier and password. By contrast, the customer information control system or method according to the present invention can assign an individual address to a user to enable the user to use the individual address to access the merchant. As a result, a user may be authenticated without requiring the user to register the password or enter the password each time access to the merchant is desired.

Claim 1 recites that an address assigning section assigns an individual address to a customer, to receive an electronic message from the customer. The Examiner appears to argue

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that the member identifier assigned to a customer is identical to the recited individual address. Applicants respectfully disagree, the member identifier is not an address to receive an electronic message from the customer as recited in claim 1. In Cockrill et al. the message sent by a member may include their member identifier but that is not identical to the member identifier being the address to receive the message.

Similarly, the Examiner appears to argue that validating member identifier in Cockrill et al. is identical to examining the destination address of the message recited in claim 1. Applicants urge that this interpretation of the claim language is in contrast to its ordinary and accepted meaning in this field. An electronic message has both an address and contents (among other things). It is disingenuous to assert that examining the contents of the message (i.e., the member identifier by Cockrill et al.) is identical to examining the actual address of the message (as recited in claim 1).

For at least the reasons presented above, Applicants respectfully urge that Cockrill et al. do not identically disclose every feature recited in claim 1. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 USC 102 of claim 1, and its dependent claims 2-4, and 7, are respectfully requested.

Claim 14 recites similar language to claim 1 but includes a conditional phrase "if received" that the Examiner interprets as having little if no meaning to the claim. Accordingly, claim 14 has been amended to replace the conditional "if". Applicants urge that no new subject matter has been added by way of this amendment. Claim 14 recites that an electronic message is examined to determine if the destination address of that message agrees with a previously assigned address. As argued earlier, an electronic message has both an address and contents

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(among other things). It is disingenuous to assert that examining the contents of the message (i.e., the member identifier by Cockrill et al.) is identical to examining the actual address of the message (as recited in claim 14). For at least the reasons presented above, Applicants respectfully urge that Cockrill et al. do not identically disclose every feature recited in claim 14. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 USC 102 of claim 14, and its dependent claims 15, 17, and 18, are respectfully requested.

The other independent claims recite similar language in which an individual address is assigned to a customer so that the customer may use that assigned address when addressing the destination for a subsequent message. When a subsequent message is received, the destination address is examined (or checked) to determine whether or not it agrees with the assigned address. Applicants respectfully urge that the member identifier and password checking techniques of Cockrill et al. do not identically disclose the examining of an electronic message's destination address as recited in the independent claims. Accordingly, Cockrill et al. do not identically disclose all the features recited in claims 20, 22, 23, and 26-30. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 USC 1-02 of these claims are respectfully requested.

Claims 5, 6, 8, 12, 13, 16, 24, and 25 stand rejected under 35 USC 103 as unpatentable over Cockrill et al. in view of Almeida et al. (US 20040083125). The Examiner admits that Cockrill et al. do not disclose that the customer is notified of the assigned address via an e-mail message but contends that Almeida et al. teach this feature and concludes that it would have been obvious to modify Cockrill et al. in view of Almeida et al. to produce a cost-effective means of communication.

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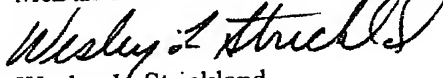
All the independent claim recite assigning an individual address to a customer that is potentially used as the destination address for a subsequent electronic message. In contrast, while the customer service system of Almeida et al. allows the exchange of e-mail addresses, this exchange is the typical e-mail address exchange where the agent provides every customer with his same e-mail address. There is no assigning of an individual address. Thus, even if the teaching of Almeida et al. were combined with those of Cockrill et al., the combination does not disclose or suggest every limitation recited in the claims. Accordingly, this combination of references does not provide the factual basis to support a *prima facie* case of obviousness. Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 USC 103 of claims 5, 6, 8, 12, 13, 16, 24, and 25 are respectfully requested.

In view of the above remarks and amendments, all remaining claims appear to be in condition for allowance and passage of this case to issue is respectfully requested.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 502624 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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